

## 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET NE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING MINUTES – August 19, 2008



On August 19, 2008, City of Auburn staff met with residents of the 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE Neighborhood at the City Hall Council Chambers regarding a proposed sewer project. The meeting started at 6:35 p.m. and ended at 8:30 p.m.

**City Staff in Attendance:** Dennis Dowdy, Public Works Director; Dan Repp, Utilities Engineer; Bob Elwell, Sewer Utility Engineer; Ryan Vondrak, Project Engineer; Duanna Richards, Community Services Manager

**Community Members in Attendance:** Lenora & Sam Summers, Tiffany Sparks, Joanne Martin, Kip & Julie Herren, Yukika Lercher, Dave Champion, Benita & Steve Harris, Ruth Herren, Joseph Rush, Nancy & Kemon Backus, Patrick & Gloria Taylor

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Dennis Dowdy welcomed and thanked everyone from the community for attending. Director Dowdy introduced City staff in attendance and continued to review the purpose of the meeting:

- Inform residents of options to install a low pressure sanitary sewer system in their neighborhood
- Let residents have an opportunity to consider the options
- Determine if the residents want to proceed with the project or not

### **Presentation**

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Ryan Vondrak outlined the 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE Sewer Extension project that's being considered, including discussion about:

- The proposed project and its purpose
- The project payment options
- Easements and right-of-way

After the presentation the meeting was opened for questions from the attendees.

### **Proposed Project**

The proposed project would include installation of a manhole, approximately 1600 linear feet of small diameter (1.5 inch and 2 inch) pipe and individual side sewers to each property within the right-of-way or easement.

Staff clarified the City did not originate this project proposal, rather we are responding to the neighborhood for sewer service. The process was initially started by someone in the neighborhood submitting a petition to the City to install sewer in this neighborhood. It was noted that property values often increase as a result of moving forward with having the sewer system installed.

## **Homeowner Responsibility**

The homeowner would be responsible for the following:

- Installing a grinder pump. When residents asked what type of grinder pump would be recommended, City staff indicated an E/one pump is a good, dependable grinder pump, but each homeowner can choose to install whatever pump system they choose to.
- Abandoning current septic system per King County Health Department requirements. Requirements include pumping septic tanks, collapsing or removing the lid, and filling the tank.
- Clearing plugs in side sewer lines caused by discharges from the home that develop between their home and the sewer main.
- Maintenance and cleaning out the side sewer located on their property.
- There was discussion concerning the extent of homeowner responsibility and who should be responsible for what. Some residents said they don't feel the homeowners should be responsible for the line that goes outside their private property and into the City's right-of-way. City staff responded that the City needs to watch out for all City taxpayers and it isn't fair for the taxpayers to pick up the cost of repairing sewer damage that a single homeowner is responsible for.

## **Project Costs**

While the total cost of the project would vary for each household depending upon how far it is from the grinder pump to the side sewer easement, the estimated cost of the project to provide the public portion of a low pressure sanitary sewer system service to the 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE neighborhood is \$192,000, which would be divided by 18 parcels if the project proceeds. The cost for each homeowner will be determined by the number of participants in the project; the more homeowners who participate, the lower the cost will be per residence.

The City indicated that each homeowner who connects would expect to pay approximately \$6,000 in additional costs to install a grinder pump and hook up to the new system.

The City indicated there are two project payment options to consider under an LID:

- Each property owner can decide to either pay the entire assessment up front or finance over a period of 10 years. If the project moves forward, under an LID, all benefiting properties would be obligated to pay their assessment whether they connect or not.

## **LID Discussion**

- An LID is sharing the cost of the project over a 10 year period of time at a reduced interest rate.
- There has to be at least a 60% majority of property owners in the neighborhood who agree to move forward with the project in order for the LID to be formed.
- One of the residents stated he misunderstood that an LID is what is being considered to pay for the cost of this project. One option that had been mentioned at a previous meeting was for the City to pay the cost of the entire project up front, and then homeowners could take out individual loans to pay the City back for their portion of the cost. Staff responded that at this time there is no secured funding for this project unless an LID is formed.

## **Residents' Comments**

The following are some of the comments made by those in attendance:

- When asked about other examples of this type of a system in the City, City staff responded there's something similar on 104<sup>th</sup> Street just south of the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge on the east side of the Green River.
- What kind of pressure are we talking about? What about backflow valves? Staff said if something is sent down the toilet that the grinder can't handle it will stop until a plumber responds to clear the obstacle. A grinder pump is designed to operate safely. Each pump is equipped with an alarm that will go off indicating there's an issue. The pumps work quite well for a relatively small system like this.
- Someone observed that if the power is off and the grinder pump is located inside the house, the water will run back into the house where the pump is located. Staff indicated that typically, if properly installed, each grinder pump would have a backflow valve that prevents such occurrences.
- A resident mentioned that in the last meeting it was stated not everyone would have to install a grinder pump because they might be able to use gravity flow if they're close to the existing gravity line. City staff indicated they will have to take another look at this on an individual owner basis to determine whether that is an option or not.
- When asked about the project timeline, City staff responded that depending upon easement acquisitions the project would probably begin in the spring of 2009. Obtaining easements may be difficult and the project could come to a halt quickly if someone doesn't agree to give the City an easement it needs to do the project.
- Someone asked if the City has looked at options for environmental grants to help mitigate costs for properties located on the river. Staff agreed to look into possible grants.
- A resident expressed frustration that the neighborhood met with the City about this project a while ago and it doesn't seem like anything has been done since. They wondered why the total cost to be included in the LID is much less this time and were told it's because the City realized they shouldn't have included the costs to install a grinder at each residence and the King County fees, so those costs have been removed from the LID.
- One resident felt the City was changing the rules midstream since what is being proposed now has changed from what was being proposed at the previous meeting.
- Another resident asked if this project would be done in conjunction with the proposed Save Our Streets project. They wanted to know if 4<sup>th</sup> Place NE is part of the Save Our Streets program; last time it was repaved was 10 years ago by King County. Staff responded the road appears to be owned by the Marsh family. Residents suggested that the City do research on the road title now. Residents indicated a waterline was put through the 4<sup>th</sup> Place SE road via an LID and no one by the name of Marsh signed off on it at that time.

## **Action Items**

The following is a list of action items for the City:

- When some residents asked what it would cost for the City to install a pump station for a gravity sewer system, City staff agreed to determine the cost and assess whether this is a viable option or not.
- In addition to the numbers to install a pump house the residents suggested that City staff research grants that could help fund this project.
- Clarify information on the easements.
- Post the PowerPoint presentation on the City's website, including the hand drawn map.
- Post a pdf of the survey map on the website or at least send it out with the survey that's going out to poll the community regarding this project.
- Ask as part of the survey if the neighborhood wants another public meeting.